

Background and Aims:

The Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP: www.scottishdental.org.uk) produces clinical guidance for dentistry in Scotland. In August 2015, SDCEP published their guidance for the Management of Dental Patients Taking Anticoagulant or Antiplatelet Drugs. The aim is to provide information and advice to support dentists in their management of patients taking these drugs including the novel oral anticoagulants (NOACs).

As part of the guidance development process information was gathered from patients about their experiences of and views about the dental care they have received while taking these drugs.

The aim of this study was to help ensure the guidance meets not only the needs of dentists but also addresses the needs, concerns and expectations of patients. The methods used to gather information from patients and the results of this project are summarised in the boxes below.



Methods:

Patients' views were gathered via an anonymous questionnaire distributed using two routes:

1) A link to the questionnaire was posted on three websites including: the Anticoagulation Europe (ACE), The Stroke Association and the AFA Association websites. The questionnaire was hosted by Questback under NHS Education for Scotland's Questback licence. Responses could only be accessed by the project team.

2) A paper version of the questionnaire was distributed by staff from the Scottish Health Council (SHC) to patients attending anticoagulant clinics throughout the Dundee area. The data from the questionnaire was collected and analysed.



Results:

Two hundred and thirty-one patients completed the questionnaire; most (80%) participants were taking warfarin and the majority (69%) lived in Scotland. Equal numbers of males and females completed the questionnaire with around a quarter (21%) being below the age of 50. More than 60% of participants said they visited the dentists every 6 months.

Most patients (80%) said they thought it was important to let their dentists know about their medication and similar number said they intend to visit the dentist as usual when taking these drugs.

Patients attending the clinics highlighted the need for oral hygiene advice for patients wearing dentures. Those who completed the questionnaire online raised their concerns about their perception of dentists having various levels of knowledge about warfarin and the other drugs and suggested the need for all dental staff to be better trained on these drugs.

A high number of patients (85%) also said they would like to have more information for patients in posters in their practices and a small number mentioned the importance of having this information available in other formats such as Braille. Patients would like more information on:

The impact of medication on bleeding gums	Oral hygiene including flossing	After care advice
Out of hours care	Lifestyle	Diet and food restrictions
Cuts and Falls	Advice on infection	Advice on Endocarditis

Acknowledgements: SDCEP would like to thank everyone involved in the study for their contribution. For more information please contact us at scottishdental.cep@nes.scot.nhs.uk or call us on 01382 740911.